

business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO FIRST SERGEANT
CHARLES W. PARKER

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I wish to rise and take this opportunity to say farewell to an outstanding Non-Commissioned Officer of the Mississippi Army National Guard, First Sergeant Charles W. Parker, upon his retirement. Throughout his military career, First Sergeant Parker served the people of Mississippi with valor and distinction. It is my privilege to recognize his many accomplishments and to commend him for the superb service he has provided the Mississippi Army National Guard and the Nation for the past 32 years.

First Sergeant Parker enlisted in the Mississippi Army National Guard in August 1965, and served as a federal technician from October 1971, until February 1981. He then began an active duty career in the Guard as a Training Non-Commissioned Officer from February 1981, until his retirement in April 1998. He served the majority of his military career with Company B, 223rd Engineer Combat Battalion, in Calhoun City, Mississippi. During his 32 years of service, First Sergeant Parker was activated three times to provide relief due to flooding, ice storms and tornadoes.

First Sergeant Parker served the Great State of Mississippi with honor. He received the Army Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal (4), Reserve Components Achievement Medal (5), Armed Forces Reserve Medal (3), National Defense Medal (2), Army Physical Fitness Award (14) and achieved the highest score in his company, battalion, group and brigade on more than one occasion.

During his 32 years of military service, First Sergeant Parker led his men selflessly by continuously putting his subordinate soldiers before himself. He is known by all throughout the State of Mississippi in National Guard circles for helping young people get into the Guard and continue their education.

Most importantly, First Sergeant Parker is also a loving husband and father to his wife Sandra, sons Brent and Kent, daughter Vanessa. While he missed valuable time away from his family during his military career, he must look forward to spending many wonderful years with them in retirement.

I know his family and the Mississippi Army National Guard are proud of his many accomplishments. My colleagues in the Senate join me in wishing First Sergeant Parker well upon his retirement. The Great State of Mississippi and the Nation are indebted to him for his many years of distinguished service.

BELLA ABZUG

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I wanted to rise very briefly and share with my colleagues the fact that a colleague who served in the House has passed on to God's glory. I knew her as a very dear friend. Congresswoman Bella Abzug died yesterday of complications of heart disease. I knew Mrs. Abzug as friend. I knew her as a wonderful Congresswoman. I want to state on the Senate floor how much she will be missed.

Congresswoman Abzug fought for the rights of women. She fought for civil rights. She fought for human rights. She was known as "Battling Bella." She had a very big heart and a very large agenda.

I cannot believe that she died of heart disease, because if there was one fault that Bella did not have, it was heart problems. In fact, it was her very big heart that wanted to be sure that women were fully included in our society and enjoyed equal protection under the law in the Constitution. She wanted to be sure that she spoke out for the women of this country and that we also included everyone else who was left out and left behind.

Also, when she left the Congress, she spoke very eloquently and added to her agenda the human rights of women and children all around the world.

She will be deeply missed. Her hat stood there. You could always find Bella in a crowd. But when the history books are searched, we will find that Congresswoman Abzug is the indelible mark on the history of the United States of America for those who worked with her. She will be greatly missed. But, most of all, she will be missed by the people she fought for and championed all of her life.

DOUBLE CHARGING FOR ATM USE

Mr. D'AMATO. Two years ago today, the Nation's two largest electronic banking networks, Plus and Cirrus, better known as MasterCard and VISA, lifted their longstanding ban on the practice of double charging ATM users. They had a ban; it was not permitted.

Now, since that fateful April Fool's Day in 1996, the joke has been on the consumers, and it has been a costly joke. They have had to shell out billions of dollars just to take their own money out of the bank.

Today, I hold up a report "Big Banks, Bigger ATM Fees" from the U.S. Public Interest Research Group. In that report they indicate that double chargers in 28 States and the District of Columbia have shown that 71 percent of all banks today are double charging consumers for the privilege of getting their own money out. That percentage is more than twice the number reported by the General Accounting Office in May of 1997. So, more and more people have less and less opportunity to be able to withdraw their money without that double charge.

Going further, it says the price of the average double charging has also risen to \$1.23. Keep in mind this charge is on top of a fee that the consumer already pays to his or her own bank. The survey found that 83 percent of the banks charged their own customer an average of \$1.18 per transaction whenever they use another ATM. So that means a consumer pays \$2.41, on average, every time they use an ATM that does not belong to their own bank.

So what we have, if a person uses an ATM six times a month—a relatively small utilization—they can be paying an average of \$173 a year more. What an April Fool's joke on the people of America.

This situation is not going to get better; it is going to get worse. What a windfall for the large banks who are now making profits of over \$3 billion a year by charging people twice to get their own money.

I am not going to say more about this except to say we will be voting on this issue. Make no mistake about it, we will be voting. When that amendment comes to the floor—and I will pick what I consider to be legislation that must be acted on—there will be hoots and hollers, why on this bill? But make no mistake about it, the people are entitled to know where their representatives stand with respect to this issue.

To date we have 10 cosponsors, evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans. I know the power and the pressure of those who oppose this, but I think it is about time we began to look at the little guy, and I'm talking about the American taxpayer.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT
COLONEL CHARLES WILSON, III

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, I wanted to let my Senate colleagues know of the retirement of Lieutenant Colonel Charles Wilson, III, a truly outstanding soldier in the United States Army. Colonel Wilson is most deserving of our attention. His career accomplishments reflect the type of military leader this nation was depended upon for two hundred years during peace and war.

Colonel Wilson has distinguished himself throughout his 23-year career as a soldier and officer in the United States Army. A native of Bowling Green, Kentucky, Charles began his service as a Military Police enlisted soldier in October 1969. As a young soldier, Charles's Battalion Commander recognized his special skills in leading and working with fellow soldiers. He received responsibility for key positions in his company, earning promotion quickly.

Within his first year he was already selected for leadership responsibility within his military police platoon. Colonel Wilson only served as a military policeman for two years before he was honorably discharged in September 1971, to pursue his college degree, which included studies as a Reserve Officer Training Corps cadet. During this

short period of duty, Charles had earned the rank of sergeant. He graduated from the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga and the ROTC program as a distinguished military graduate, and he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Infantry in May 1977. After graduation as an Infantry Lieutenant, he was assigned to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Again, Charles' inherent leadership skills were soon recognized. As a junior Second Lieutenant, his Brigade Commander selected him to command Bravo Company, 5th Battalion, 3rd Basic Training Brigade.

Because of his mature and talented leadership and his competence, the Commanding General later designated Charles' company as the first at Fort Leonard Wood to integrate women trainees into the basic training program. His hard work and enthusiasm as a company commander ensured that his unit successfully accomplished the challenging task.

Subsequent assignments found Lieutenant Colonel Wilson with increasing amounts of responsibility to include duties as a Company Commander with 197th Separate Infantry Brigade, Fort Benning, Georgia; G3 for Operations and Plans, Schweinfurt Military Community, 3d Infantry Division, Germany; and Deputy Division Comptroller for the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

In September 1990, Charles deployed with the "Screaming Eagles" to Desert Shield and Desert Storm. He was one of only five Combat Comptrollers in the desert. His expertise in resource management and contracting was invaluable. The Division's units and soldiers had the items they needed to go to war and the items they needed to maintain quality of life at Camp Eagle, Saudi Arabia.

The Army reassigned Colonel Wilson in 1993 to the Pentagon to work in the Inspections Division of the Office of the Inspector General and later with the Army Budget Office as the "point man" for developing and validating the Army's cost of conducting contingency operations. His current and final assignment has been as the Deputy Chief of the Congressional Budget Liaison Office, Army Budget Office. Through his tireless effort and positive "can do" personality, Wilson ensured that soldiers were well represented on Capitol Hill.

Speaking for Kentucky and the nation, I wish to thank this distinguished soldier, his wife Melissa, sons Jason, Andy and daughter Kathryn, and to wish him continued success in future endeavors.

DEATH OF COLLEEN CLEARY-MYERS

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I rise today to offer tribute to the late Ms. Colleen Cleary-Myers and to offer condolences to her family on their loss.

Mrs. Cleary-Myers was a beloved wife, daughter and mother. I describe

her this way not only because it is true, but because, in a very literal way, it was these ties to these people that helped to define her life. It is these ties which are her legacy.

Mrs. Cleary-Myers, only 30 years old, died of complications associated with a rare form of leukemia called chronic myelogenous leukemia. When she learned she was suffering from this illness, she was joyfully pregnant with her first child. Her husband, Michael, shared in this joy and grateful anticipation. In this way, she resembled most other young mothers. But unlike them, she was faced with a cruel choice: she could be treated immediately and risk the life of her baby or she could delay chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant, be treated after the child's birth and be unable to have more children. When faced with this dilemma, she did a noble thing. She chose to postpone treatment and looked forward to the birth of her son, Derek Vincent.

Upon learning the news, Mrs. Cleary-Myers' family resolved to support her in any way that they could. Two of her sisters were compatible matches for the required bone marrow transplant and both were eager to assist her.

Tragically, Mrs. Cleary-Myers died on March 15th. While I join her family in mourning her untimely death, I also am uplifted by the example and the standard she sets for all of us. Her example is the example of unselfish love and the standard she sets of willing and uncomplaining sacrifice for the sake of another life is one to which we can all aspire. Because this young woman knew, in an intimate way, a simple truth: Every life is infinitely precious and valuable.

Too often, when confronted with an example of courage and sacrifice, we tell ourselves that others are capable of, and perhaps called to, such behavior, but we, most surely, are not. I believe this conclusion is a mistake. The example of Mrs. Cleary-Myers, a young woman living happily and without notoriety, reminds us that we are all capable of such gallantry and, in different ways, are called to it. Her son, Derek Vincent, provides us with eloquent testimony that such gallantry can sometimes mean nothing less than the protection of life itself. May God bless her, her husband and little Derek Vincent.

FOOD STAMPS TO LEGAL IMMIGRANTS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, the 1996 welfare law unfairly reduced SSI, Medicaid and food stamp benefits for legal immigrants. Food stamps alone were cut by \$25 billion. No other program has been cut as deeply.

Last year, recognizing that these cuts were too extreme, Congress restored SSI and Medicaid to many elderly and disabled immigrants. It's time to finish the job and ensure that those whose Medicaid and SSI were restored, do not go hungry. And we should do the same for children of legal immigrants.

Last week, the conferees on the Agricultural Research bill made a down

payment toward restoring food stamps for the needy legal immigrants. The conference report on the bill includes \$818 million for this program. It is far less than the \$2 billion proposed in the President's budget, and it covers a much smaller group of immigrants.

The conferees' proposal is a bipartisan effort. Both Republicans and Democrats urged them to take this step as soon as possible.

Yet, the Republican leadership in the Senate is ignoring the urgent need. The Republican budget does not include a single penny to restore food stamps to immigrant children, refugees, Hmong veterans, or elderly and disabled legal immigrants, and the Republican leadership has declined to allow the Senate to pass on the Agricultural Research bill.

According to Department of Agriculture estimates, at least 935,000 low-income legal immigrants lost their federal food stamps in 1997 as a result of the 1996 welfare law. Nearly two-thirds are immigrant families with children.

Many legal immigrants live in poverty and have great difficulty feeding their families. In fact, according to the Department of Agriculture, the average legal immigrant denied food stamps has an income equal to just 62 percent of the poverty line, or about \$8,000 for a family of three.

In addition, thousands of refugees who have applied for citizenship could lose food stamps as they wait in the naturalization backlog for their applications to be processed if the 5 year limit on food stamps for this group is not extended to 7 years.

The effects of these food stamps terminations is not limited to legal immigrants. Their children born here are American citizens but they too are facing sharp reductions in their food stamps. Their children remain eligible for food stamps themselves, but the removal of their parents from the program has meant that the food stamp benefits for their families have been cut by 50 to 70 percent in many cases. 600,000 poor children who are American citizens live in families where food stamp benefits have been reduced for this reason, resulting in less food for all family members, including the children.

The food stamp cut-off has hurt immigrant families, and it has also hurt state and local governments, who must fill the gap. As a result, governors and state legislatures have joined Congress to restore these food stamp benefits. As Governor Bush of Texas said, "Food stamps are a federal program and the federal responsibility, but the federal government is shirking its responsibility. The rules have changed unfairly and retroactively for those least able to help themselves."

It is time for the Senate to act on the bill. It is unconscionable that these benefits can continue to be denied.